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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT,

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2004

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES

BRIEFING

EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEALS

Verheugen: Violence will solve nothing - Hurriyet

Beslan a powder keg - Milliyet

Putin won't meet with 'child killers' - Hurriyet

Turkish truck driver killed near Samarra - Aksam

Talabani offers Kurdish guards for Turkish truckers -

Milliyet

Bloody fighting in Baghdad: 41 dead - Milliyet

OPINION MAKERS

Verheugen asks for more Kurdish cultural rights - Yeni Safak

Verheugen: Turkish reforms impressive, but not sufficient - Radikal

Putin will get tougher - Cumhuriyet

New Russian-Israeli cooperation against terror - Cumhuriyet

Thousands of Russians march against terror - Cumhuriyet

Advised by Clinton, Kerry launches attack - Radikal

Massacre by Israeli missiles: 14 Palestinians killed - Yeni

Safak

BRIEFING

EU enlargement chief in Turkey: Turkey has made a start on improving cultural rights for its Kurdish minority under EU reforms, but the reform program must go further, European Union Enlargement Commissioner Guenter Verheugen said on Tuesday. Verheugen highlighted Kurdish language education and broadcasting as key areas for further steps. Verheugen is in Turkey on a final fact-finding trip ahead of an European Commission report on Turkey's EU entry bid. 'I'm pleased that broadcasting has started, but I have to say that what we have seen so far can only be a beginning,' he told reporters during a visit to Tuzla village near Diyarbakir, in southeast Turkey. Verheugen said that Turkey should increase efforts to allow displaced Kurds to return to villages destroyed in the 20-year separatist conflict. Two policemen were killed in an attack on a police checkpoint in Diyarbakir while Verheugen was in the city. Verheugen told representatives of human rights organizations that the EU entry process would ensure the continuation and acceleration of domestic reforms. Lawyers reportedly told Verheugen that there had been a decrease in human rights violations in the region, thanks to Turkey's efforts to get a date for entry talks. On Wednesday, Verheugen will proceed to the Aegean city of Izmir for meetings with local officials and representatives of civic organizations.

Iraqi Kurdish leaders visit Ankara: Visiting northern Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) official Necirvan Barzani said after meeting with FM Abdullah Gul that the current border crossing system should be strengthened before a second border gate is opened between the two countries. Responding to a question, Barzani said the northern Iraqi Kurds are part of the central government in Baghdad. Barzani said in his meeting with Gul that the Kurds considered the PKK/Kongra Gel to be a terrorist organization and an enemy of Iraqi Kurds. Several papers reported, however, that Barzani urged the Turks to use Osman Ocalan, whom he characterized as a 'moderate,' to Turkey's benefit in its struggle against the PKK. Barzani also urged Gul to start direct flights between Turkey and the northern Iraqi city of Suleymaniye. Turkey is a model for the Iraqi Kurds, Barzani noted. On Tuesday evening Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), stopped over in Ankara en route to Europe. Talabani told reporters that Turkish truck drivers could be escorted by Kurdish guards if Turks choose the Suleymaniye-Kirkuk route instead of the road through Mosul. Commenting on recent military clashes in Tel Afer, Talabani said that some Turkmen in the city had been killed by terrorists, not by US forces. Talabani will be meeting with MFA officials on Wednesday.

Another Turkish Driver Killed in Iraq: All papers report that another Turkish truck driver was killed in Iraq yesterday. The driver, who was not immediately identified, came under attack on the road near the northern Iraqi city of Samarra. Meanwhile, the captors of Tahsin Top, a Turkish driver who was taken hostage more than 40 days ago, have demanded ransom money in exchange for his release.

Iraqi children die of clashes, disease: About 3,000 Iraqi children die every month due to fighting, disease and malnutrition, the Iraqi Health Ministry reports in today's "Zaman." Some weapons used by US forces in the region have caused new children's diseases unseen in Iraq before the war, the ministry said. The shortage of medicine in Iraq is worse than the situation during Saddam's time, "Zaman" claims. The Iraqi Health Ministry also pointed to problems in the distribution of medicine around the country. Iraq's only drug production plant is in Samarra in northern Iraq, the site of frequent armed clashes.

PKK Kidnaps three in Lice, Diyarbakir: PKK militants have allegedly kidnapped three civilians in the southeastern town of Lice, near Diyarbakir. Captors of the three have demanded ransom to secure their release.

AKP Still Tops Polls: A public opinion poll released by the ANAR polling firm shows that the AKP holds a large lead against all political rivals. 51.2 percent of respondents in the poll expressed a preference for AKP, while just 16.8 percent favored the opposition CHP. No other party received over 10 percent support. A majority of respondents, about 52 percent, identified unemployment as the biggest problem facing Turkey today.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Global War on Terror

"The side effects of terror"

Sami Kohen noted in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (9/8): "The North Ossetia disaster is big enough to shake up both Russian domestic and international politics. The Russians voiced their strong reaction against the terrorists, yet the Russian incompetence in dealing with the problem has also put the Putin administration on the spot. People are upset at those Russian officials who either showed a very weak performance or lied to them. Even Putin himself has been subjected to harsh criticism. . This is the most serious crisis Putin has faced as President. He might try to be 'tougher' from now to restore his weakening popularity, or he might try to silence his opponents. Based on his most recent remarks, the latter course seems more likely. . The incident will also have an effect on Russian foreign policy. Putin is trying to gain Western support on the Ossetia issue by making a linkage to international terrorism. Some leaders, including President Bush, have already lined up next to Russia. However, some political circles of Europe and some in the US press are treating this issue with greater caution. The Dutch Foreign Minister, for instance, struck a suspicious tone, which drew an angry reaction from Putin, who blamed the Europeans for applying double standards. Putin seems bound to go through a very tough period, both internally and internationally."

"Saving Islam"

Cuneyt Ulsever warned in the mass appeal "Hurriyet" (9/8): "The fact is that vicious murderers are being produced from Muslim populations. They have shown a willingness to abuse the Koran without shame. It is also a fact that 99.99 of the Muslims have nothing to do with any of this. Yet a tiny few encourage or advocate terrorism based on a sense of 'vengeance' for perceived injustices. All of this leads to another bitter fact, which is the identification of Islam with these murderers as far as international public opinion is concerned. . Fortunately, a majority of Muslims in this country act with common sense. But they now have an important task -- to restore the image of Islam. Turkey's EU vision is a project that embraces two civilizations -- Islam and the Western world. This project allows Turkey to be a bridge between civilizations. . Turkey must condemn terrorism in the strongest possible terms before the entire world."

EDELMAN